



The Birth of a Mother Three Phases of Mother Development

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“Welcome to your new life!” a grandfather once said to his daughter as she exclaimed to her brand new baby boy, “Oh, is it time for that already? That was quick.” Her son was hungry again only two hours after his first feeding. Suzie had gone through to the other side – from pregnant, expectant mom to full-on mother – and began the journey that would last a lifetime.

As much as we get thrown into motherhood, becoming a mother is also a process that develops over time. It’s like learning anything else in life; a new sport, a new job, a new relationship, or moving to a new place. It requires holding the past in perspective, lots of patience to embrace what is currently happening, and a vision and perseverance toward a positive future.

I remember talking with a friend across the country as we had both given birth to our precious lil’ babies only days apart. She was so frustrated by the fact that she didn’t have time to do ANYTHING, not even take a shower or make herself lunch. We were both sleep deprived and as the days wore on we realized that we were far from our old lives; freedom to come and go as we pleased, ability to sleep through the night and take care of ourselves. As long as we remained attached to what our lives used to be, we only made matters worse for ourselves and everyone around us. Instead we reflected on our past, but kept it in perspective allowing it its place as our journey that lead us to this point in our lives. We released all expectation to get back there any time soon.

This is not to say forget everything that ever was in your life. Instead acknowledging the past is a technique for putting it in its place, knowing that everything you did up until this moment has meaning and value, and at the same time ensuring that you’re not stuck in the past. As long as one remains stuck in the past, she can never step into the present, never mind contemplating and preparing for the future. This I found is the first phase of Mother Development – **Honor and Release the Past!**

As soon as we were able to do that we found ourselves much more capable of being present in our new lives. We made a pact at that very moment to change our expectations and shift our focus from the way our lives used to be to a new perspective that embraced what was happening right here and now. We celebrated our achievements on those days

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that we were capable of more than the bare basics. People say, “How does such a little person demand so much of us?” Well, that’s a baby’s job, and the sooner a new mom can embrace that reality, the happier she will be.

One mom, remembering back to when she was expecting her first child, said, “I felt I was entering the realm of a big unknown and that my freedom was being zapped from me.” Though she admits that motherhood did not come naturally for her initially, now a mother of two, she says, “I can honestly say that I truly love being their mom. I won't lie and say that it's all fun because most nights I'm still not getting enough sleep. Still there's far more joy in it than turmoil.”

This is the second phase of Mother Development – **Embrace what is!** Embracing what is does not mean resigning yourself to what is if it’s not exactly what you desire. It means easing up on the reins of what ‘should be’ and accepting and appreciating what is going on in every moment – the good, the bad, and even the ugly. By accepting and appreciating what is, you are able to release the energy that is holding that very thing in place, allowing you to attune your awareness and take guided and effective action toward a more desirable future state. So if you are feeling trapped by motherhood, embrace the feeling, feel it through and through, and then release it and open yourself for what’s to come. On the other hand, if you are relishing motherhood, embrace every moment to ensure that you are truly present and living each moment doing what you love, while allowing things to change and grow as they naturally do.

A great example of embracing what is comes from a dear friend of mine who explains, “So many things scared me about becoming a mom. I wasn't excited for the delivery; I wasn't excited about the life changes; I wasn't excited about sharing my husband with a new girl. The day she arrived, I wasn't scared anymore and went back to being "myself." I've loved the changes and enhancements that everyday motherhood has brought. I never knew how it would bring me patience (yes, really), love, and a different and better way of prioritizing life. I no longer worry if I'm running late for a class at the gym; the extra five minutes with my daughter ensuring she's strapped in the car safely is well worth the minutes I forego exercising. My heart sings when she smiles and says, "I love you." There aren't words to express how much taking care of my family and myself adds meaning to my life.”

The third phase of Mother Development is to **Create what will be!** It takes some time to move through the first two phases before you arrive at the third. This phase is about building motherhood and your life the way you want it. A mom of two children, ages 5 and 2 1/2 years, shares that she was a very career-oriented and goal-driven engineer when she and her husband decided to have children. They had been married for 5 years at that time and were well engrained in their lives. She left her job when her first son was born, but needed to find identity beyond mothering, so she pursued a variety of things including education, exercise, and special projects. Gradually she got back to working 2 days a week and enjoys a wonderful balance now.

Creating what will be involves visualizing what you want as it aligns with your true self. As you visualize, deeply feel what it feels like to achieve your dreams. From that state, you are more likely to create what it is you desire.

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Being aware of the three phases of Mother Development and knowing that they cycle moment-by-moment, day-by-day, and year-by-year, will allow you to move through the first year of motherhood with greater insight and compassion for yourself – which will enable you to establish a strong foundation and be the mom you want to be!

Gretchen Reid is the founder of Motherhood Transitions and offers a 3 part workshop for expectant and new moms entitled The Birth of a Mother. To learn more and register for this workshop, visit her website at <http://www.motherhoodtransitions.com>.

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